01. POLICY STATEMENT

01.01 The Student Affairs Division is committed to ensuring the success of a diverse student population by creating and fostering a safe, welcoming and comprehensive learning community through the development and delivery of high quality programs and services.

01.02 The primary purpose of this policy and procedure statement is to define the services of the Counseling Center and to specify eligibility for and limitations of counseling services provided by the center.

01.03 Specific objectives of the policy and procedure statement are:

a. To define the counseling services provided by the Texas State Counseling Center.

b. To establish a policy of eligibility for services of the Counseling Center.

c. To establish a policy which defines the range and extent of counseling services provided by the Counseling Center.

d. To establish a policy for maintenance, handling, and release of student counseling records.

e. To establish a policy for use and storage of psychological tests.

f. To establish a policy for utilizing graduate trainees as providers of service in the Counseling Center.
02.01 Personal, psychological and/or adjustment counseling will be provided, on a short term basis, by professional counselors, psychologists or trainees for students who are experiencing personal, emotional, or adjustment problems, which interfere with their ability to perform effectively in their academic courses, or with their ability to live and work among other university members. Counseling will be provided individually, in couples or in groups depending upon the nature of the student’s problem, availability of services, and staff determination of appropriate services.

02.02 Prior to receiving services, students must be provided a written explanation of Counseling Center policies regarding the provision of services, confidentiality of services and records, and the student's rights and responsibilities in the counseling process. The student must sign an Informed Consent for Treatment Form. This form acknowledges that the student has been informed about the services to be provided and has been afforded the opportunity to give willing consent to participate in these services, in compliance with Section 465.11 of the Rules and Regulations of the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists (TSBEP). In emergency situations, when the client must be seen immediately, a written explanation of services should be provided and the Informed Consent for Treatment Form should be signed as soon as possible.

02.03 Psychological, educational and career testing services may be provided on a limited basis to:

- a. assist students in enhancing self-awareness and to facilitate student growth and development.
- b. assist in the diagnosis of psychological or learning disorders.
- c. provide testing support for career counseling services in the Counseling Center
- d. support the individual and group counseling process.

02.04 Educational and training workshops dealing with student mental health and growth and development issues will be provided on request to academic classes, student groups, and university staff depending upon the availability of time and professional staff.

02.05 The Counseling Center serves as an internship and practicum site for graduate trainees in psychology, counseling, and related fields. It also provides supervised experience for postdoctoral psychology residents. A designated Training Director in the Counseling Center will coordinate supervision of postdoctoral residents, doctoral interns and
doctoral/masters-level practicum students. The Training Director, with approval of the Director, may designate a Coordinator of Practicum Training.

03. **ELIGIBILITY FOR SERVICES**

03.01 Any registered student may be eligible for the services of the Counseling Center during the student’s period of enrollment at Texas State.

03.02 Priority for services will be given to undergraduate students enrolled for more than eight credit hours in a long term semester and more than three credit hours during summer sessions, and to graduate students enrolled for more than three credit hours during any enrollment period.

03.03 Students enrolled for fewer credit hours than specified in paragraph 3.02 are eligible for counseling services on an "as time permits" basis.

03.04 Spouses, family members and "significant others" who are not enrolled at Texas State are not eligible for services of the Counseling Center. Courtesy referral assistance may be provided to these individuals upon request of the student. In couples counseling, both partners must be enrolled at Texas State.

03.05 Texas State faculty and staff who are not enrolled as students at the university are not eligible for clinical services of the Counseling Center. Faculty and staff may be permitted to attend some educational and outreach programs provided by the Counseling Center.

03.06 Students new to Texas State who have not yet registered for class but who have completed high school and who have a letter of acceptance to the university may be provided limited consultation and referral as staff time permits. Counseling is not provided until the first class day of the student’s first semester of enrollment.

03.07 Former Texas State students who are on suspension from the university are not eligible for the services of the Counseling Center. Consultation will be provided to assist the suspended student in preparing to return to the university on an "as time permits" basis. Courtesy referral assistance will be provided to suspended students upon request.

03.08 Texas State alumni who are not currently enrolled are not eligible for services of the Counseling Center. Courtesy referral assistance will be provided to these individuals upon request.

03.09 Any exceptions to eligibility for services must be approved by the Director of the Counseling Center on a case-by-case basis.
04. RANGE OF SERVICES

04.01 The Counseling Center provides short-term counseling to help students deal with personal or psychological concerns so that they may succeed academically at the university. Counseling services are not intended to provide long-term therapy for students with chronic and serious emotional or psychological problems. Students whose problems or counseling needs are determined by the professional staff to be beyond the scope of services provided by the Counseling Center will be referred to appropriate licensed or certified professionals outside the university.

04.02 Students requesting couples counseling who are determined by professional staff to require long term therapy will be referred to appropriate licensed or certified professionals outside the Counseling Center.

04.03 Counseling session limits may be established for individual and/or group counseling services depending upon the Counseling Center’s ability to meet the student demand for services.

05. CONFIDENTIALITY

05.01 All aspects of the student’s participation in the counseling process at the Counseling Center, including the scheduling of appointments, content of counseling sessions, all contents of counseling records, and outcomes of counseling are considered confidential. Confidentiality of counseling will be protected according to the requirements of Rule 465.37 of the TSBEP Rules and Regulations and Chapter 611, Mental Health Records, 611.001-611.008 of the Texas Health and Safety Code, Title 7.

05.02 Faculty and staff who refer students to the Counseling Center by direct communication with the Counseling Center may, only with client consent, be notified about whether or not contact with the referred student has been made in accordance with confidentiality policy requirements.

05.03 When, as a result of emotional problems, a student client poses a clear and potential danger to self and/or others, law enforcement or medical personnel may be notified about the student’s situation.

05.04 In accord with the U.S. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, a Counseling Center Privacy Officer will be established. All staff will receive ongoing training on counseling center privacy and confidentiality policies.

06. MAINTENANCE OF STUDENT COUNSELING RECORDS
06.01 Accurate and current records of all psychological services provided directly to students individually and/or in groups will be maintained in accord with Section 465.22 of the TSBEP Rules and Regulations.

06.02 Students must sign an Informed Consent for Treatment Form (Attachment I) prior to receiving psychological services. In emergency situations, the form should be signed as soon as possible. This form acknowledges the student’s consent to use health information he or she provides to the Counseling Center, and to maintain counseling records, in accord with the confidentiality and privacy rules established in the U.S. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act and compliance with Chapter 181, Medical Records Privacy, of the Texas Health and Safety Code, and as described in the Counseling Center Important Information for Clients brochure.

06.03 Official student counseling records may be maintained electronically and/or on paper copy. The records may include contact and demographic information; mental health history data; test data or profiles obtained as part of the diagnostic or treatment process; case notes; notes, exercises or other communications made by the student that the student wishes to have as a part of the record; any completed release of information authorization forms; reports received from other medical, health or mental health professionals at the consent of the student; and a case summary including the number and dates of the student’s counseling visits.

06.04 Student counseling records will be maintained for a total period of seven years beyond termination of counseling. At the end of seven years, student counseling records will be properly destroyed.

06.05 Student counseling records are considered confidential. All paper copy records will be maintained in a locked file cabinet in the file room when not in use. The file room will be locked and alarmed at night and when no staff is in the Counseling Center. Electronic records are maintained on the Counseling Center network server. Access to these records is double password protected.

06.06 Student counseling records may only be accessed by students or appropriate third parties in accordance with the requirements of the U.S. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act; Chapter 611, Mental Health Records 611.001-611.008 of the Texas Health and Safety Code, Title 7; and Chapter 181, Medical Records Privacy, of the Texas Health and Safety Code, Title 2.

06.07 In general, a student counseling record may be released to a third party or accessed by the student upon written request by the student and/or the
completion of the Authorization to Release/Obtain/Exchange Confidential Information (Attachment II) form signed by the student or upon receipt of a court ordered subpoena. A subpoena which is not court ordered will not be honored.

a. On some occasions, a student may request that his or her counseling record or a part thereof be made accessible to a third party who is not a practicing mental health professional (e.g., parent, attorney, medical practitioner, etc.). An Authorization to Release/Obtain/Exchange Confidential Information form (Attachment II) which specifies the third party to whom the record will be made accessible must be signed by the student. References to other persons or personal identities will be deleted prior to giving access to the third party (non-mental health professional). The counselor/director may deny access to any psychotherapy notes portion of the record which he/she determines would be harmful to the client's physical, mental or emotional health. Raw test data is also to be excluded from records to be released.

b. Student counseling records must be surrendered in response to a subpoena signed by a court official. A subpoena that is not court ordered will not be honored. All aspects of a student's counseling record may be required to be released by court order. Upon receipt of a court ordered subpoena, the counselor should request to provide a case summary in place of the counselor's personal treatment notes and a summary interpretation of any test data in place of raw test data. If a counselor deems certain information to be harmful to the client or others, he/she may advise the client to seek a court judgment to release only a portion of the record. Upon receipt of a court ordered subpoena, Counseling Center staff should follow the procedures specified in the Texas State Counseling Center Guidelines: Release of Records in Response to a Court Ordered Subpoena (Attachment III).

c. A student counseling record is considered a professional record to be used by the counselor in treatment of the student. A student who wishes access to his/her counseling record must make a formal written request three full working days in advance of when access to the record is desired. Upon receipt of a written request by a student for access to her/his records, the counselor should follow the procedures specified in the Texas State Counseling Center Guidelines: Responding to a Student Request for Access to Her/his Records (Attachment IV).

06.08. Student test data are not considered a part of the student’s counseling record. In accordance with state law, raw test data, including completed
answer forms, specific test scores, profiles, and symptom checklists or inventories will not be released as part of the student’s counseling records. Test data and protocols generated by the Counseling Center will be released only to another qualified and licensed mental health professional as requested by the client or in response to a court order. A counselor may provide a student, at the counselor’s discretion, with a profile for tests measuring career/vocational trait factors, or personality characteristics considered part of the normal-range of functioning, for the purpose of career or self-awareness counseling. No test profiles will be released to a student without a counselor providing a test interpretation session prior to the release.

07. MAINTENANCE AND STORAGE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS

07.01 Psychological tests will be used in accordance with the Ethical Principles of Psychologists published by the American Psychological Association (APA) and the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing published by the American Educational Research Association, APA, and the National Council on Measurement in Education.

07.02 The content of psychological tests is confidential. Psychological tests and special testing equipment and/or components will be stored in a secure storage area.

07.03 Psychological tests will be administered in the Counseling Center or other university rooms under the supervision of a Counseling Center staff member. Testing may not be self-administered by students away from the Counseling Center or without professional supervision unless specific approval is given by the Director or an Assistant Director.

08. GRADUATE/POSTGRADUATE TRAINING

08.01 The Counseling Center will provide internship and practicum opportunities for graduate students in psychology and counseling, or related fields.

08.02 Graduate students must have completed all internship or practicum-prerequisite courses in order to be eligible to compete for internships/practica at the Texas State Counseling Center.

08.03 Interns, practicum students and postdoctoral residents will be selected by the Counseling Center staff.

08.04 An academic year doctoral or master’s practicum consists of 14-16 hours per week of supervised experience which includes a minimum of one hour per week of individual clinical supervision. Experiences may include individual, group and/or couples counseling; vocational and/or
psychological assessment; training and supervision; and outreach and consultation.

08.05 A doctoral internship consists of one year of full-time supervised experience that includes a minimum of two hours per week of individual clinical supervision by a licensed psychologist and a minimum of two hours of additional training. Experiences may include individual, group and couples counseling; vocational and psychological assessment; consultation and outreach; intake and crisis intervention; supervision of practicum students; training and supervision. For specific information see the Counseling Center Internship in Professional Psychology Manual.

08.06 A postdoctoral psychology residency consists of one year of full-time supervised experience that includes a minimum of two hours per week of individual clinical supervision by a licensed psychologist. Experiences may include individual, group and couples counseling; vocational and psychological assessment; consultation and outreach; intake and crisis intervention; supervision of practicum students; and training and supervision of interns.

09. MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS SA/PPS

09.01 Major responsibilities for routine assignments associated with this SA/PPS include the following:

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<td>Director, Counseling Center</td>
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10. CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

This SA/PPS has been approved by the following individuals in his/her official capacity and represents Texas State policy and procedure from the date of this document until superseded.

Director, Counseling Center, Senior Reviewer

Vice President for Student Affairs